

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Cabinet** held in **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Wednesday 6 February 2019** at **10.00 am**

Present:

Councillor S Henig (Leader of the Council) in the Chair

Cabinet Members:

Councillors J Allen, O Gunn, L Hovvels, O Johnson, C Marshall, A Napier, K Shaw and B Stephens

Apologies:

Councillor J Brown

Also Present:

Councillors E Adam, J Atkinson, J Clare, J Considine, L Maddison and J Shuttleworth

1 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

2 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4 Medium Term Financial Plan 2019/20 to 2022/23 and Revenue and Capital Budget 2019/20 [Key Decision: CORP/R/18/01]

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Resources and the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided comprehensive financial information to enable Cabinet to agree the 2019/20 balanced revenue budget, an outline Medium Term Financial Plan MTFP(9) 2019/20 to 2022/23 and a fully funded capital programme (for copy see file of minutes).

In presenting the report the Corporate Director of Resources advised that the figures based in it were on the provisional settlement, and that as the details of the final settlement had been released the day before was able to confirm that there were no changes. The Corporate Director thanked staff, and members for their assistance in bringing this report together.

Cabinet members commented on the savings that had already been made and that if these savings were agreed then it would mean that the council would make over £234m in savings by 2019/20, and that by 2020 over 3,000 posts would have been lost. This had been as a result of austerity measures and funding cuts to the council. It was pointed out that the council was very fortunate that it was able to meet the shortfall from within the budget support reserve, and would continue to protect front line services as far as possible.

Members referenced the unfairness in the distribution of the funding continued for Durham in comparison to other authorities, and this impacted on Durham's spending power. It was pointed out that the authority has less core spending than the English average, and if it were the same as the average it would have an additional £44m in funding. It was noted that the core spending figures quoted by government assumed that the increase in council tax would be to the 3% limit however Cabinet was recommending an increase of 2.99%. It also assumed that the Adult Social Care precept was to the maximum limit and Cabinet was recommending a 2% increase in line with this.

Despite continually lobbying the government it was felt that they were not listening as the previous day they had agreed cuts of £16b in local government funding. The position for funding for Durham beyond next year was not yet known, there was uncertainty over public health funding, and that the outcome of the fair funding review would be known later in the year. The council would do all it could to continue lobbying on these issues. There was significant uncertainty over future funding which made planning very difficult.

The feedback from overview and scrutiny was welcomed as was that from the public and AAPs. Cabinet members thanked the Corporate Director of Resources and his officers, and the Deputy Leader of the Council for their calm financial stewardship.

Resolved

It was unanimously agreed to recommend to full council approval of the recommendations set out in the report.

5 School Admission Arrangements Academic Year 2020/21 [Key Decision: CYPS/01/18]

The Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services which sought approval for the proposed admission arrangements and oversubscription criteria for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for the 2020/21 academic year (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

6 Children and Young People's Strategy

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which presented the final draft of the Children and Young People's Strategy 2019-2022 for approval (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

7 Phasing Out of Unnecessary Single-Use Plastics

The Cabinet considered a joint report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Local Services and Director of Transformation and Partnerships which reviewed action by the Council and its partners to significantly reduce single-use plastics (SUPs) and sought Cabinet agreement to sign a County Durham pledge to further reduce unnecessary single-use plastics (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Adam, Chairman of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee provided the feedback from the committee about the review. Cabinet members welcomed the report and thanked everyone who had been involved in this work.

Resolved

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

8 Vélo of the North

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Regeneration and Local Services which informed of an approach from CSM Sport and Entertainment to develop a mass participation cycling event in County Durham. The report sought approval to work with CSM and partner organisations to jointly deliver the event subject to all partner organisations reaching agreement on the safe and effective delivery of the event (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

That the recommendations in the report be approved.

9 Council Activity Report

The Cabinet considered a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships which provided an update on work to support some of the Council's key priorities (for copy see file of minutes).

Resolved

That the report be noted.